

**TALKING POINTS FOR
REMARKS
DELIVERED BY
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ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR AGING
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
FOR
PRESS RELEASE OF FINDINGS
FROM THE
2002 NATIONAL POLL OF WOMEN AGE 50 PLUS
CONDUCTED BY
NATIONAL CENTER ON WOMEN AND AGING AT BRANDEIS**

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**THIS TEXT IS THE BASIS OF REMARKS DELIVERED BY ASSISTANT
SECRETARY CARBONELL. IT SHOULD BE USED WITH THE UNDERSTANDING
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Good Afternoon:

- ▶ I am pleased to be here with you this afternoon, and to help the National Center on Women and Aging release findings from its **2002 National Poll of Women Age 50 Plus**
- ▶ This poll was conducted under an Administration on Aging funded grant with Brandeis.
- ▶ The 1,000 women who responded to this important survey provided information that be of great value as we prepare to serve Baby Boomers as they age.
- ▶ This national study is one of the first to focus on the economic concerns of women from age 50 to over age 80.
- ▶ The concerns of the women in our lives are the concerns of the entire family.
- ▶ With the information provided by this survey, we can learn more about women's attitudes and how their concerns about financial security, employment, health and caregiving can influence their families, their friends and their own futures.
- ▶ At AoA, we are sensitive to the pivotal role women play as caregivers in the home as well as the roles women play; as highly trained and skilled members of the Nation's workforce.
- ▶ Many women carry out more than one of these roles at the same time.
- ▶ So, we were very pleased when AoA received funds from the Congress to address the concerns of older women.
- ▶ We look forward to using this information as we provide older people with the tools and resources to age successfully.
- ▶ Findings from this poll show that the majority of married women surveyed said that aging is better than expected – and, to the surprise of many, challenged the image of aging as an unpleasant experience.
- ▶ The findings from women who aren't married are a little different.
- ▶ These findings alert us to be concerned about the growing number of women who are not married – more of whom say aging is worse than they expected.
- ▶ This latter group of women includes future older individuals for whom we must carefully consider what steps we will take to help them age with relative ease.
- ▶ At AoA, we are taking steps now, to assist today's older women while building a foundation to provide help for older women of the future.

- ▶ At AoA, we focus on the broad range of issues important to the welfare of older individuals. Life is a series of transitions. We are concerned about helping family caregivers as well as helping society find ways to make the transition into old age with greater ease.
- ▶ This is why we are working with Brandeis to convene a national summit on women and asset development early next year. This summit will provide an opportunity for women of all ages to share a national dialogue on one of the 21st century's most important issues.
- ▶ AoA also funds the POWER Center, operated by the Women's Institute for a Secure Retirement (WISER). The POWER Center is a one stop center where women, especially low income women and women of color, can access information that will help them better understand the financial issues that influence their lives now and into the 21st century.
- ▶ Much of this information has been translated into Spanish to help us reach a wider audience.
- ▶ AoA is an active member of the Department's Coordinating Committee on Women's Health. We are helping to plan a Diabetes Town Hall meeting and a National Women's Health Week for May 2003 which will include Women's Health Check-Up Day.
- ▶ AoA's representative to the Committee keeps the issues of interest to older women on the Committee's agenda. We all can agree that connecting the broader concerns of older women and health in an open forum is important.
- ▶ We partnered with the CDC on the successful October 2002 National Women's Health Conference and its follow-up.
- ▶ At that national meeting, AoA chaired a session on older women that highlighted some of the issues important to them.
- ▶ In the area of Osteoporosis, AoA is a member of the Working Group for the Surgeon General's Report on Osteoporosis and Related Disorders.
- ▶ We fund 3 Osteoporosis grants that are forming a partnership to develop a comprehensive national osteoporosis education campaign for post-menopausal women.
- ▶ This is an area of importance to my colleague Dr. Vivian Pinn. Her work in the area of hormone replacement therapy reinforces the need to connect knowledge about prevention with knowledge about life transitions.
- ▶ In summary, this poll provides valuable information for consumers, the media, policy makers, and professionals. Use of the findings can lead to a better way of life for older individuals. And, when it comes to leading the way it brings to mind this simple message that I saw on a T-shirt, "Some leaders are born women."